Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

"O God, the King of righteousness, lead us, we pray Thee, in ways of justice and peace; inspire us to break down all tyranny and oppression, to gain for every man his due reward, and from every man his due service; that each may live for all and all may care for each." Amen

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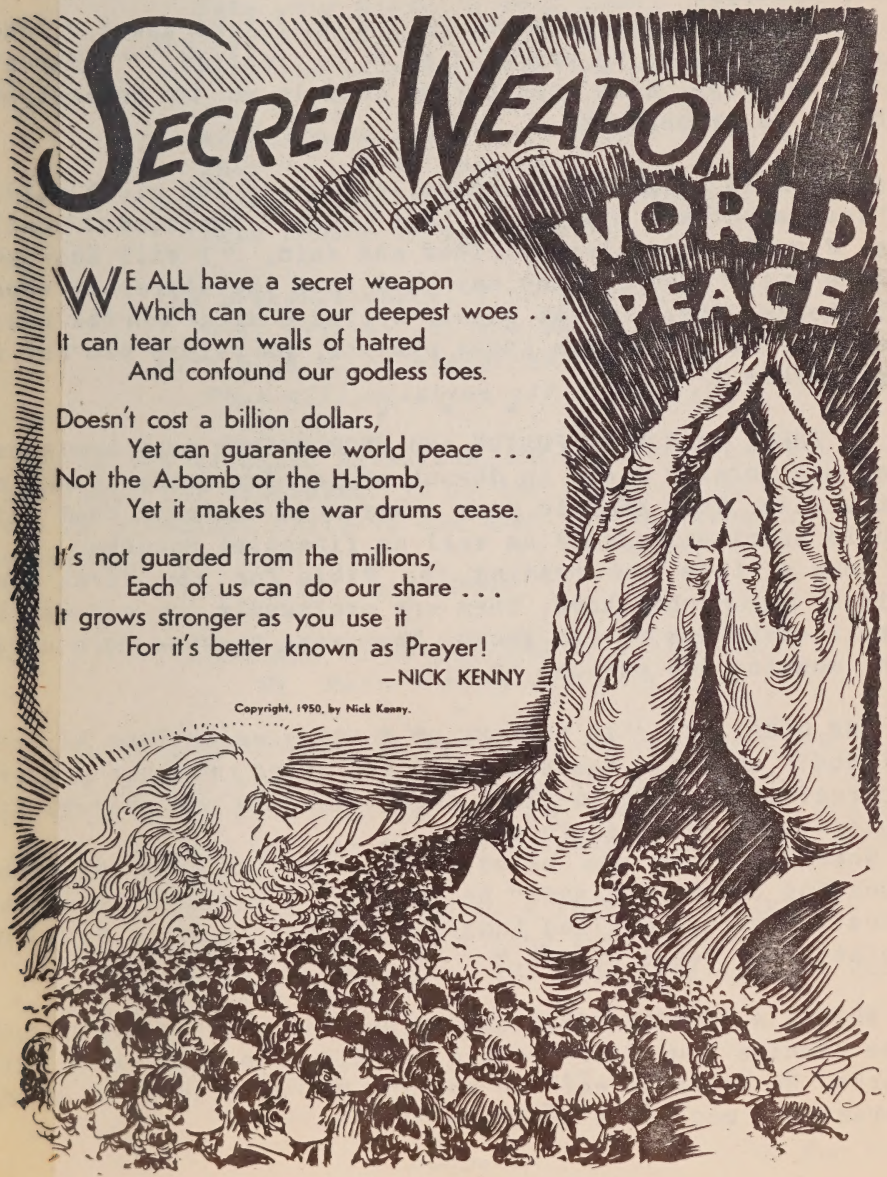
SECRET WEAPON
WORLD PEACE
WE ALL have a secret weapon
Which can cure our deepest woes . . .
It can tear down walls of hatred
And confound our godless foes.
Doesn't cost a billion dollars,
Yet can guarantee world peace . . .
Not the A-bomb or the H-bomb,
Yet it makes the war drums cease.
It's not guarded from the millions,
Each of us can do our share . . .
It grows stronger as you use it
For it's better known as Prayer!
—NICK KENNY
Copyright, 1950, by Nick Kenny.
RAYS

TAKE TIME TO PRAY

By Grenville Kleiser

A PROMINENT NEW YORK BUSINESSMAN was deeply engrossed in making money. He devoted every available moment to being a "go-getter." He accumulated money, but in reality he was very unhappy.

He spoke to a friend about it, and the friend asked, "John, do you take time to pray?" "No," he replied, "I haven't time to pray. Keen competition compels me to concentrate wholly on my business."

A FEW DAYS LATER the friend called again. The clerk said, "You cannot see him now." "But I must," insisted the caller. Finally the clerk yielded and said, "I will show you where he is," and led the way back into the storeroom among the boxes. There in that quiet, secluded place was the businessman. He was on his knees praying, and before him lay an open Bible.

* * *

IN THESE DAYS OF CONFUSION AND UNCERTAINTY many businessmen are turning to God in devout prayer for guidance and instruction. They want to know a way to do business that will build spiritual assets as well as financial success.

Some of them are reading the Bible for the first time since their childhood. They are profoundly in earnest in their quest for Divine Truth. They want to know more about the meaning and purpose of life.

THE QUESTION, "IS MY LOVE OF MONEY greater than my love of God?" sent one businessman to his knees in humble prayer. Thereafter he kept in close touch with Him and thereby his entire life was transformed.

When Gladstone was asked, "What is the most important question before England?" he replied, "The most important question before England today or any day is one's personal relation to Jesus Christ."

WRITES A COMMENTATOR, "Christ becomes real to the person who studies the Bible record of His life, His work, His words. He remains real to the one who continues to study Christ and meditates upon Him."

Face the new day with the influence of a few thoughtful, quiet moments with your own heart and God. Meet Him with His open Book of counsel before you, and face the duties of the day with Christlike faith and courage.

"A moment in the morning,
Take your Bible in your hand,
And catch a glimpse of glory
From the peaceful promised land.

It will linger still before you
When you go to busy mart,
And like flowers of hope will blossom
Into beauty in your heart.

The precious words, like jewels,
Will glisten all the day,
With a rare, effulgent glory
That will brighten all the way."

IT IS NOT MATERIAL ADVANTAGE, nor the pursuit of pleasure, that make for happiness. It is the sense of duty well done and of steadfast faith in God that win the crown of righteousness.

oooOooo

THE LAW OF GIVING AND RECEIVING

By Harry Halsey Starrett

"It is more blessed to give than to receive"; yet, for one to give, someone must receive. It, therefore, behooves each of us to be a gracious receiver as well as a gracious giver, thereby helping those who would be gracious givers, to fulfill The Law.

And so, receiving is, itself, a form of giving; it completes the circle and makes giving continuous.

Through giving, we receive; through receiving, we give.

oooooooOooooooo

"We make a living by WHAT WE GET;
We make a life by WHAT WE GIVE."

oooOooo --*N. Mac Ewan.*

PRAYING 'IN PEACE'

By Mary Hornaday

In a televised interview not long ago, a youngster asked United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold why there is no reference to God in the UN Charter.

In his reply, the Secretary-General drew the boy's attention to the Preamble of the Charter where the nations express their "faith in the dignity and worth of the human person" and pledge themselves "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors."

Discussing the incident later, Mr. Hammarskjold said: "I felt sure that he saw here an expression of what, in the faith which was his, was recognized as the will of God--that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. He could not expect a document, which should serve as a basis for world cooperation, to go further in the direction he had in mind. The UN stands outside--necessarily outside--all confessions, but it is, nevertheless, an instrument of faith. As such it is inspired by what unites and not by what divides the great religions of the world."

It is in this same spirit that representatives of the world's leading religions held their annual prayer vigil in the UN Meditation Room, during UN Week, October 17-24. With no formal wars in the world today it is interesting to note that those who prayed "for peace" can say that this year for the first time since the room's establishment in 1951 they prayed "in peace" as well.

Since this is the case, attention can be turned a little more wholeheartedly toward discovering the faith that unites the religions of the world, especially here in the glass house beside the East River where Christian works side by side with Jew, and Moslem shares the conference table with Hindu and Buddhist.

* * *

A sampling of thought here indicates support for Mr. Hammarksjold's belief in the UN Charter and its resulting international activity as an instrument of faith.

For instance, here is what Mrs. Oswald B. Lord, a Christian and United States delegate to the Human Rights Commission, says: "Faith in God, who plays no favorites among the children of men, leads to a clear recognition of the de-

pendence of nations and peoples upon one another and their moral responsibility to one another. In the UN we have a fresh symbol for our generation of 'man's ancient dream of a community in which none shall be afraid.' But it is more than a symbol. It is an organization for international cooperation through which we may work toward the realization of our ideals of freedom, justice, and peace for all people.

"The UN is the greatest venture of our time for peace and international cooperation. It cannot automatically guarantee security, but it does provide a shield for the peace of the world--an opportunity to work out a solution for many problems which otherwise would lead to war."

Mrs. Zena Harman, of Israel, is convinced that the UN, especially in its work in the field of human rights, reflects the tenets of Judaism. "There is no more basic tenet in Judaism than justice--the rule of law," she says. "Man dares to demand justice even from God. This is vividly illustrated in the story of Naboth's vineyard. King Ahab coveted the vineyard of a neighbor. He offered as compensation 'a better vineyard' or 'the worth of it in money.' But Naboth declined. And there was nothing the King himself could do to acquire the coveted piece of land.

"It was this conception of the rule of law superior to the will of rulers which gave rise to the modern doctrine of the rights of man from the first American declaration of individual and civic freedom drawn up by the Pilgrim Fathers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations."

A Moslem, Miss Laili Roesad, of Indonesia, says: "Islam teaches the people to live in peace and with respect for each other's point of view. The verses in one part of the Koran, the 'Surat Ali Imran,' stress the principle of unity and cite, as an example of its necessity, the tribal discord and discord of pre-Islamic Arabia. In that 'Surat (chapter) Allah praised Mohammed the Prophet because of his leniency toward people and because of his habit of consulting people about conduct of affairs.

"There may be differences of interpretation among the religious experts but this does not mean that people have to fight each other and be angry with each other. In my opinion, the Koran contains one of the most important principles which the UN today tries to achieve--the development of

friendly relations among nations by way of coming together and discussing matters of importance to the whole world."

Mrs. Lakshmi Menon, another familiar UN figure, is a Buddhist, converted from Hinduism. Buddhism, she says, teaches its adherents to abandon lustful and immoral thoughts and wants, teaching that these cause unhappiness and strife. "We don't believe in God or caste,"Mrs. Menon says, "but we talk a good deal of Karma--the law that man's life is determined by his previous actions. We strive for stainless days, as must all those who work for and with the United Nations. As I see it, the UN where we try to bring human rights within the realm of practical politics is part of that perfect service that every good Buddhist must render to mankind for his own happiness."

Some visitors complain of the plainness of the UN Meditation Room where the only altar is a tree section symbolizing growth and where there are only white flowers that offend the color sensibilities of none, but if it is viewed as a concrete evidence of a certain common denominator of faith in men's innermost beings that they can live together in peace and harmony, its very simplicity inspires awe.

oooOooo

FAITH

To climb forever upward though
The road be rough and steep;
To have the Joy of Christ within
While others faint and weep;
To see the danger yet believe
In the Father's power to keep--
That is faith.

To look on broken hopes but top
With song each hard-won hill;
To be engulfed in cloud but know
The sun is brilliant still;
To rest in peace and trust it all
To Heaven's holy will--
That is faith.

--Mildred Long.

oooOooo

THROUGH DEEDS TO GOD

We approach our Creater by every right exertion of the powers He gives us--

Whenever we invigorate the understanding by honestly and resolutely seeking truth and by withstanding whatever might warp the judgment;

Whenever we invigorate the conscience by following it in opposition to the passions;

Whenever we receive a blessing gratefully, bear a trial patiently or encounter peril or scorn with moral courage;

Whenever we perform a disinterested deed;

Whenever we lift up the heart in true adoration to GOD;

Whenever we war against a habit or desire which is strengthening itself against our higher principles;

Whenever we think, speak or act with moral energy and resolute devotion to duty, be the occasion ever so humble, obscure, familiar, then the divinity is growing within us and we are ascending towards our Author.

True religion thus blends itself with common life. We are thus to draw nigh to GOD without forsaking men. We are thus, without parting with our human nature, to clothe ourselves with the Divine.

--A. S.

(Observed by Mrs. Thomas M. Taylor)

oooOooo

A MOMENT FOR THOUGHT

How smooth would be the human path each day,
If we could only think before we say
Or do, the things that cause the heart to bleed.
How deadly is the thoughtless word and deed.

--Zelma S. Dennis.

oooOooo

PRAYER THERAPY

By William R. Parker

Research has shown that prayer
is a powerful thing

Positive Prayer is receptive prayer. We have to let ourselves be helped. True Prayer is not begging, but an affirmation. We do not make things happen, we allow them to come to pass. True prayer affirms the thing which is to be in such a receptive way that the white matter of the brain is revitalized by positive patterns that become a permanent part of one's being. True prayer, then, is a process, a development.

Positive prayer involves listening. There is a voice within that some prefer to call the "super-ego." It does speak to us and from the contact we gain real insight into ourselves. As Joshua Liebman emphasized again and again: "They would have peace of mind but will not look within."

The big reason the majority are not, and possibly cannot be positive in their religion, and particularly in their prayers, lies in their concept of God. If their God is an authoritarian God, their inadequacies and "sins" are frightening, since they believe that God will and is punishing them for their disobedience. They not only feel but claim unworthiness. They become bogged down in their own mire.

Unless prayer is positive it may be dangerous. The thoughts or desires we hold eventually conquer and control our lives. Make prayer positive.

Generally speaking, it is possible to fulfill what we really desire. We need to think of God, first of all, as at the very center of our being. We look within to begin with. We open up the windows of our mind and let God flow in and through us.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for change to take place without mental imagery. With the mind's-eye, we must see ourselves as we desire to be. As we constantly hold this image and re-emphasize it in our meditations and prayers, we tend to become as the mental image we hold. Through positive imagery our life becomes one of continual unfoldment. The unfoldment will be in proportion to the integrity of

one's personality and not from specific techniques. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Prayer by affirmation is more powerful and is more likely to succeed than prayer by petition. The subconscious mind is a slave. It not only does its own work that is not trusted to the conscious mind, but it reacts to what is habitually held in the conscious mind. The subconscious has no power of discrimination, no moral sense. It is completely impartial. There is latent power here to be used by each of us almost how we will. If one holds fear, guilt, and hate within his conscious mind, the subconscious will react accordingly, since these are given it to feed upon.

If on the other hand, we hold faith, hope, and love, in the center of our attention the subconscious will feed and act upon these. Growth is the fundamental law of life, so plant the positive, helpful, creative thoughts that cannot help but grow. At the same instant we see ourselves this way in our own mind.

If we expect failure, we will get failure. The skeptic finds it impossible to believe he can be helped through prayer. Many fail to realize that the mind that can conceive the meaning of the present cosmos is greater than the cosmos it conceives. The mind and body are one. We cannot be other than what we think.

Most writings on prayer make the experience sound too easy. Those who use it as a spare tire, only when emergencies arise, are disappointed in its results. Prayer is a difficult skill. No complicated skill is mastered by hit or miss methods. Prayer must be made a regular and a regulative part of life.

A psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, or any therapist not only would not expect an individual to be helped if he came to the clinic irregularly or only a few times, but he would probably dismiss him as a patient. There is a follow through, a gradual unfoldment in all therapeusis.

Regular praying helps one to identify gradually oneself with the spirit of Christ. For this reason we not only have to be patient but we must be sincere in our prayers.

We must attempt to be absolutely honest with ourselves. We must attempt to get the unrecognized emotions into consciousness, so that eventually our relationship to reality will cease to be distorted.

Regular praying is not enough, however. Many of our modern illnesses arise from our disturbed mental states. Most of the functional disorders, such as duodenal ulcers, asthma, arthritis, heart trouble, etc., have as their source of origin fear, guilt, and misguided love. Lack of love, or misguided love, is surely the most important of the three, since the goal of all therapy is to awaken or help the person to express a greater capacity for love.

If we have resentments and hatreds within us for any persons, we are not only impoverished, we are in danger of an illness or other functional disorder. The ancient writers understood this concept very clearly. "If, therefore, thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother." Unless we forgive, our minds are not free. We are slaves to our own thoughts, whatever they may be. For those that we harbor feelings of hatred or resentment, we can either go and set things aright, or we can begin to overcome this feeling by sending the individual a thought of blessing in our prayers. Complete help depends upon ridding ourselves of this most detrimental of all aspects--lack of love.

Praying regularly, with an emphasis on love, we too can say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

Pray regularly the last thing at night before we retire, letting our minds be filled with positive, loving thoughts. affirm and give thanks. Pray the first thing in the morning, setting a happy, positive attitude for the day. Through the day utter positive affirmation and say, "God, I thank Thee."

As we pray we may listen, and face up to our own weaknesses by getting rid of hate and resentment within us and love will come in. We then become channels for the inexhaustible energy of the universe, and through prayer release it into our lives.

Possibly the greatest thing about prayer is that it treats the whole person. This is the desired goal in all modern psychotherapy. From our analysis, the reader can see that prayer is not thought of, nor presented, as magic.

In no way must religion be used as moralism. Prayer therapy, like psychotherapy, does not and must not deal primarily with symptoms. In dealing with symptoms, condemnation

of oneself is more apt to be present. The symptoms are bypassed in order to diagnose causes. When the causes are found and evaluated and let go through prayer therapy, cure can be the result.

Prayer is health -- it is life. It soothes and calms. It mends and heals. It is the golden chain that reaches God and binds one heavenward. Prayer lets us glimpse our life eternal.

Let your prayers be a spectrum of your life's colors. Follow each ray of light, withdraw to the mountain top of prayer alone and discover that you are not alone. Prayer then emerges into adoration. "Glory to God in the highest." When prayer becomes adoration, we can sense the true greatness of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's lines:

God shows sufficient of his light to rise by,
And I arise!

This can be true for each of us if we believe it, and act as if we believed it.

oooOooo

ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Behold in Heaven the stars, and one
Shines brighter than the rest;
To each it is a different sun
That holds its planets round it dressed.

And looking up none can deny
The Power that rules all earth and space;
Yet needs our prayer that He come nigh
To still our wars with love and grace.

--Elizabeth Jessup Blake.

oooOooo

My times are in Thy hand, O Lord,
Go Thou with me and I am safe.
And above all, make me useful in promoting
Thy cause of Peace and Good Will among men.

--David Livingstone.

oooOooo

UNITED NATIONS ALL FAITH PRAYER FOR PEACE:

God of the measureless universe. . .Creator of men's conscience. . .to Thee in this our fervent prayer for peace, we lift our voices in unison.

We. . .people of every faith. . .of every creed. . .join together. . .pleading for truth, justice and charity among men. We pray for Thy omnipotent aid in this hour of imperiled civilization.

That Thou shalt cast out forever from human thought that flaming intolerance which makes for war and breeds bloody aggression.

That the advocates of war shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into prunning hooks.

We pray to Thee for the restoration of concord and amity among all the peoples of the earth.

That all persons recognize the liberty due religion, and for the renewal of the way of life that is fruitful of great and good works.

This, O Lord, is our fervent prayer, and this is our mingled tribute to Thy everlasting mercy. --Amen.

* * *

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER:

Our Father, again we come to the sacred season when we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ--Thy Son and our Saviour--born in Bethlehem. We are filled with tender memories, and spiritual longings, while love and worship unite to bring us to Him--Babe of Bethlehem; Everlasting God! We thank Thee for the beauty and the blessing, the music and the message of Christmas.

For us all may the Star of Bethlehem shine again, and may the Angels sing!

Grant to little children the gladness of Christmas Day; and to us all, the glory, and sweetness, and strength of our wonderful Christmas Faith!

All this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

--Amen

W. J. Thompson, D.D.

* * *

A WORLD-WIDE PRAYER:

Almighty God who rulest in all the kingdoms of men, help us, who are of many races, languages and customs to draw closer in true fellowship, bearing one another's burdens in brotherly accord, that we may establish Thy Kingdom of righteousness. Pardon our sins and shortcomings. Keep far from us all selfishness and pride, give us untiring patience with one another; help us to employ Thy gifts of ordered freedom to Thy glory and the good of mankind, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. --Amen.

The Reverend Robert C. Hunsicker,
Vicar of St. Paul's Chapel-Trinity Parish.

* * *

A BAHA'I PRAYER:

My God, Whom I worship and adore! I bear witness unto Thy unity and Thy oneness, and acknowledge Thy gifts, both in the past and in the present. Thou art the All-Bountiful, the overflowing showers of Whose mercy have rained down upon high and low alike, and the splendors of Whose grace have been shed over both the obedient and the rebellious.

O God of mercy, before Whose door the quintessence of mercy hath bowed down, and round the sanctuary of Whose Cause loving-kindness, in its inmost spirit, hath circled, we beseech Thee, entreating Thine ancient grace, and seeking Thy present favor, that Thou mayest have mercy upon all who are the manifestations of the world of being, and to deny them not the outpourings of Thy grace in Thy days.

All are but poor and needy, and Thou, verily, art the All-Possessing, the All-Subduing, the All-Powerful!

--Baha'u'llah.

* * *

A JEWISH PRAYER:

O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. Be my support when grief silences my voice, and my comfort when woe bends my spirit. Implant humility in my soul, and strengthen my heart with perfect faith in Thee. Help me to be strong in temptation and trial and to be patient and forgiving when others wrong me. Guide me by the light of Thy counsel, that I may ever find strength in Thee, my Rock and my Redeemer. --Amen.

From Rabbi Samuel M. Silver.

* * *

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

What would Christmas be without the Christmas Tree? It is the one universal symbol of the Christmas Season.

Whether it is indoors or out; flickering with candles, or glittering with colored bulbs; trimmed with fragile ornaments, or homemade popcorn balls; it is welcomed the world over as the joyous sign of the Christmas festivities.

But why do we have a Christmas tree? The probable answer would be, "Oh, everyone does," which leaves us just where we started. It is true, "everyone does" and it is just as true that strangely few people know the reason. It has been claimed the Christmas tree originated in Egypt hundreds of years ago when it was a general practice to decorate the house with branches of the date palm at all religious festivals. The date palm being the symbol of life over death. Other traditions place its origin with the Jews, as a heritage of their Feast of the Lights, of which lighted candles were a feature.

The most popular tradition of all comes from Germany, and is told in a popular German legend. It seems that Hans and Gretchen, two German youngsters were left all alone in their cottage one winter evening. As the wind howled about they huddled before the fire and told each other stories of the strange sights they had seen in the forest. Suddenly there came a faint knock at the door. They were very much frightened, yet Hans bravely advanced to the door and flung it open. Standing before them was a little boy, smaller than either one of them. His feet were bare, his clothes were thin and he stood shivering with the cold.

In a timid voice, he asked them if he might come in and warm himself at their fire. "Yes, indeed" cried the children, and eagerly made a place for him before the small blaze, depriving themselves of most of the warmth. Then they urged him to eat their frugal supper which meant that they themselves would go hungry.

As he grew warm and sleepy they persuaded him to go to sleep on their bed and tried to make themselves comfortable on hard wooden benches.

After they had finally gotten to sleep, Hans and Gretchen were awakened by strains of soft music outside the cabin. Rushing to the window they found a band of children, dress-

ed in shining robes and playing beautiful golden harps. As the boy and girl stared in amazement, the strange child that they had sheltered stood before them. Gone were his thin rags, gone the hungry look. The child was dressed in shining robes and a strange light shone around his head. In a soft, beautiful voice he was speaking:

"I was cold and ye took me in. I was hungry and ye fed me. I was tired and ye gave me your bed. I am the Christ Child wandering through the world to bring peace and happiness to good children. As ye gave me, so will this tree give you every year at this time rich fruit."

So saying, he broke a branch from a fir tree, planted it in the ground, and with a word to the shining children, they all disappeared. But the small branch grew into a beautiful tree and every year bore a crop of toys and all things good for the children.

oooOooo

DO YOU KNOW THEM?

Mr. Meant-To has a comrade,
And his name is Didn't-Do.

Did you ever chance to meet them?
Did they ever call on you?

These two fellows live together
In the house of Never-Win.

And I'm told that it is haunted
By the ghosts of Might-Have-Been.

--*Author Unknown.*

oooOooo

The spirit of Good-Will among men
Rests upon spiritual forces.

oooOooo

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF CHRISTMAS

By W. J. Thompson, D.D.

God has brought together in the Christmas Story things we never dreamed could be blended--and on a tapestry woven of stable straw and star-light we behold a picture that touches the heart, illumines the mind, thrills the soul, and transforms every part of human life.

The amazing story of Christmas continues to fascinate each generation of readers because of its truth, and its dramatic contrasts. It is old, yet ever new - timeless and also most timely. The story is told with a simplicity captivating in its clearness, and at the same time marvelously profound.

It includes God and man; angels and sheep; wise men and ignorant shepherds; the darkness of night, and blinding super-natural light; indescribable glory and common tasks; the riches of heaven and the poverty of earth; deep silence and thrilling sounds of angelic music; the mystic splendor of the blazing star, and the dimness inside the manger; and crowning all, the figure of a carpenter bending tenderly over a happy mother, holding a tiny baby. And so the Son of God was born!

The Old Testament opens with the figure of a man in a garden. The New Testament opens with the figure of a child in a manger. Around the figure of the man in the Old Testament Genesis weaves the story of "Paradise Lost". Around the figure of the child in the New Testament the Gospels weave the story of "Paradise Regained".

Bethlehem is the birthplace of the sweetest story ever told. There is nothing in all literature to be compared with the Gospel stories of the birth of Jesus Christ. They have cast their spell on music, and art, and life itself.

"Only God could have thought of Christmas!"

Its beauty is beyond description - simple, yet sublime - so homey and yet so heavenly!

The lowly shepherds and distinguished Wisemen united in worship before Jesus Christ proclaim the universality of the celebration of Christmas.

oooOooo

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

God of the universe, sea and sky,
How can we thank Thee as days pass by
For blessings that fall like dew on the rose
Refreshing its heart at sunset close?

How can we love Thee enough to show
Thy beauty and loveliness here below;
Thy gracious tenderness, patience and care
So freely given that all may share
In making this world a happier place
For every color, creed and race?

Give us the wisdom, power and strength
To carry throughout the breadth and length
Of this world, where suspicion now holds sway,
The Lamp of Truth, whose burning ray
Shall scatter the darkness of evil thought
By the machinations of men inwrought
Until a new era dawns on our view
With all nations seeking to renew
The words of the song, "Good will to men,"
And Peace on earth shall reign again.

--Ae'lis Churchill Chaphe.

oooOooo

THE ANSWER

The day brought confusion and night brought despair,
So I whispered my story to Him in a prayer:
The outlook seemed hopeless - my spirit seemed gone, -
But He sent fresh courage on wings of the dawn.

--Rev. John Henry Owens.

oooOooo

CHRISTIANITY: ITS MESSAGE FOR THE ORIENT

(From: "RE-THINKING MISSIONS")

By William Ernest Hocking, D.D.

(Such favorable comment has been forthcoming from previously published instalments of "RE-THINKING MISSIONS" that a few paragraphs from the Chapter, "Message for the Orient" are presented herewith.)

The uniqueness of Christianity is in no way compromised by the developments we have been describing. To recognize the basis of agreement among the great religions is at the same time to clarify the points of difference. As in personal intercourse individuality is sharpened, so the association of religions in any common cause makes salient the individuality of each.

In respect to its theology and ethics, Christianity has many doctrines in common with other religions, yet no other religion has the same group of doctrines. It would be difficult to point out any one general principle which could surely be found nowhere else. But there is no need--it is a humiliating mistake--for Christianity to contest priority or uniqueness in regard to these general ideas. As we were saying, there is no property here: what is true belongs, in its nature, to the human mind everywhere.

* * *

It was one aspect of the genius of Jesus that amid a rich store of earlier codes and doctrines he discerned what was essential and brought it to brief and forcible expression. The essence of the law he states in the two great commandments; the essence of right conduct in the Golden Rule; the essence of prayer in the Lord's Prayer; the essence of theology in the picture of God as Father; the essence of the social ideal in the vision of the Kingdom of Heaven among men.

* * *

Only a religion whose first principles are capable of the simplest formulation can become a religion for the modern man, whether in the Orient or elsewhere. The religion which assumes too much knowledge of the supernatural realm, its system of heavens and hells, or its inner mechanisms of eternal justice, can no longer be a living issue.

* * *

The great simplicity of its (Christian) doctrine is not

inconsistent with wealth in symbol, imagery and story. Religion has to speak to the emotions and the will, not to the intellect alone. Further, the historical and imaginative elements of religion are not mere illustrations or adornments of faith; they are parts of its meaning. When religious truth is drained off into a set of propositions divorced from their emotional setting, it is somewhat less than true. The narratives and parables of the Gospel, unique in the sacred literature of the world, have probably influenced the lives of men far more than the exacter formulations of faith.

In general, our Protestant churches, as compared with Roman Catholic and Buddhist have made too little of the concrete and poetic elements of religion, conveyed through all the forms of art, through local setting and ritual expression. To the Oriental this lack is an impediment; for the symbolic and personal expression of religion is his native channel for appreciating it.

Symbols without explanations run to theological mummery; explanations without symbols run to philosophical dry bones.

* * *

To a world of men preoccupied with the struggle for living amid the actualities of physical facts and laws and of social relations Christianity, with other religions, declares that the most real of all realities, the most momentous for human concern, is the unseen spirit within and beyond these visible things, God.

For Christianity, God is not far off; but in all our actions we are dealing with him whether we know it or not; in plowing, sowing, reaping; in the work of home, shop, office; in effort and rest, in success and failure, God is present, imperceptible, forceless, all-powerful. He is an undiscerned strength to those who serve their fellow men. Those who ignore him fail of truth and build on what is perishable.

Though God is everywhere present, Christianity holds that God is also One; so that in the world there is one purpose and one divine power with whom we have to deal,--not many.

Christianity is prepared with the polytheistic faiths to see God in varied aspects. Since he is present in all events, the sensitive soul, whether seer or poet or peasant, may perceive him at many turns and in many guises: the richness

of life is enhanced by these numerous meetings. Those are the poor, for whom the shell of finite appearance never breaks.

But in all these myriad discernings the being of God is not dispersed, nor his character varied. If there is a God in the pain or in the terror of the world, it is the same God as appears in its beauty: this is the only hope for the ultimate conquest of evil. Nor are these events in which God appears removed from the realm of natural law: to the unity of nature corresponds the unity of the divine will. It is only through this unity that the sciences are freed for their full work, unhampered by threatened intrusions from the supernatural.

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Christianity believes in the real presence of God in personal life and teaches that the highest privilege of religion is a direct experience of companionship with God and union with his will.

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The realization of human welfare requires the deepening of the self by reflection, meditation and self-mastery. Hence practical religion tends to be an alternate or double process of withdrawal from the world and immersion in the world, of prayer and social activity.

* * *

If Hindu, Buddhist, or Taoist tend to exalt the ideal of the secluded and ascetic life to the detriment of the realization of God in human affairs, the practical spirit of the age may in reaction tend to identify religion with social performance. It must be emphasized that activity runs shallow, loses zest, meaning, and ultimately effect; and social efforts lose their power to cohere; unless they return from time to time to recruit the springs of the will in communion with the Great Will.

* * *

Christianity regards no human grouping as sacred in itself: none can command absolute loyalty. The stability of them all--family, economic order, nation--is conditional upon the loyalty of each member to something beyond the group itself, the spirit of love and justice, which is God. In this sense, it is the law of history that men and groups must lose their lives in order to save them.

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CHRISTMAS

The Christmas Season, with all its significant appeal and beauty (although besmirched with commercialism) is upon us again and we joyfully dedicate this number to the followers of Christ.

Outnumbering the world's next largest religion by nearly two and a quarter times, Christianity has cast a powerful influence for nearly two thousand years across the world, and preponderantly for good. But at times it has indulged in wild orgies, say of the Crusades which inspires a modern historian to characterize that abortive movement as "courage without honor." So, progress has been thwarted more by inward rather than outside influences. From Judas Iscariot to the present day there have been plenty calling themselves Christian who would sell the Bethlehem Babe for a piece of silver and even less. It is not too much to say that figuratively the scene on Calvary is being repeatedly re-enacted today.

And is it not because He stands in the way of greed, lust, theft, lies, prejudice and pride? -- the very things which obstruct the way to world peace. That word *"PEACE"* was the keynote of the song sang over Bethlehem and formed the central theme in His subsequent teachings. And yet, as has been said in these pages before, there have been but few years, since His birth, when war has not been rampant in the world. Even within the ranks of Christianity itself there have been debaucheries which can only be charged to degraded intellects, to say nothing of the wars between religious sects. The conquest of Peru is an example of greed and lust running free-handed over a peace-loving people whose sun-worshiping appeared in contrast to be pure saintliness.

But, in spite of all of this, Christmases have come and gone year after year. The Christ Child lives in the hearts of His sincere followers. His teachings are more influential than those of other religious founders. His way to peace throughout the world is also that as suggested on page one of this issue--for:

"The most powerful secret weapon in all the world is a secret weapon in the human heart--THE POWER OF PRAYER."

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APPRECIATION

Again we are indeed grateful to Nick Kenny and Ray Schumann. This time for the use of the poem and drawing on page one, which also appeared in the New York Daily Mirror on August 30, 1954. The management of that newspaper has graciously consented to this being used at this time by Fellowship in Prayer.

We are indebted to Miss Mary Hornaday and The Christian Science Monitor for the privilege of re-printing "Praying 'In Peace'" on page 4. This article was originally observed by Mrs. George F. Holl, Jr., an advisor. In this is presented "a sampling of thought" concerning United Nations.

* * *

As always we are grateful to our Contributing Editors for their share in this Christmas number and to the following who are not otherwise recognized:

FAITH - *By Mildred Long.*

A MOMENT FOR THOUGHT - *By Zelma S. Dennis.*

PRAYER THERAPY - *By William R. Parker. (Re-printed by the cordial approval of the writer and the courtesy of the publisher of SCIENCE OF MIND)-*

ON CHRISTMAS EVE - *By Elizabeth Jessup Blaké.*

A WORLD-WIDE PRAYER - *The Rev. Robert C. Hunsicker.*

A JEWISH PRAYER - *From Rabbi Samuel M. Silver.*

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING - *By Ae'lis Churchill Chaphe.*

THE ANSWER - *By Rev. John Henry Owens.*

THIS YEAR PRAY - *By Jessie Cannon Eldridge.*

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NOTICES

DECEMBER is the month of GIVING and RECEIVING.

Those who are blessed in obtaining bonuses and extra dividends could find no greater satisfaction than sharing in a most worthwhile cause--Fellowship in Prayer--gifts to which are used toward the development of a spiritual regeneration. It is our earnest hope to become established on a free-will-offering basis, but until such time arrives we must appeal to interested friends for gifts, bequests and annuities, which will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged; as will also subscriptions to our publication--FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER--the rate of which is $2.00 per year.

CHRISTMAS CARDS. It is deeply regretted that the large number of requests received for a new 1954 card could not be satisfied. We hope to do better next year! For those who have not already used our previous cards, or those who wish to re-order, we still have some on hand.

PRAYERS. Inquiries for prayers of different faiths prompted those on pages 12 & 13. Many which we have published during the past five years should be re-printed in usable form. We are dedicated to the development of prayer by all toward a spiritual regeneration.

COMMENTS. We have been greatly inspired by the receipt recently of so many favorable comments regarding FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. Would that each issue could devote space to share with our readers some of these stimulating and heart-warming remarks. This may be possible in a future issue.

THE PURPOSE of the organization is:

> "To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

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THIS YEAR, PRAY

This year let us pray. . .for common things;
For common peace, for peace has wings
To soar across high mountain-sides,
To find the fields where hate abides.

For common love, for love spreads far
To gather mankind, like a net,
Together in a common groove
Of happiness, without a threat.

For common homes where man may live
Quiet and content, and dare to bring
His inner dreams at close of day
And name them without whispering.

For a common Faith that beckons men
In peace and love beside His throne,
Humble, awakened, brothers all,
Never more lost. . .never more alone.

--Jessie Cannon Eldridge.

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